



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ART. X. — *The Works of WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, the Plays edited from the Folio of MDCXXIII., with various Readings from all the Editions and all the Commentators, Notes, Introductory Remarks, a Historical Sketch of the Text, an Account of the Rise and Progress of the English Drama, a Memoir of the Poet, and an Essay upon his Genius.* By RICHARD GRANT WHITE. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co. 1858.

DURING the last ten years Shakespearian criticism has excited much general regard. The discovery by Mr. Collier of the old annotated folio of Shakespeare's Plays; his publication, first, of the manuscript notes, and then of a Shakespeare with "the Text, regulated by the recently discovered Folio of 1632," and the fierce controversy which followed, have made what was before a matter of interest to comparatively few almost a popular theme. Among the books which that dispute called forth was "Shakespeare's Scholar," by Richard Grant White of New York, a critical volume of great merits, which at once placed its author in the foremost rank of Shakespearian scholars. We have now the first instalment of a new edition of Shakespeare's entire works by the same hand, an edition of a character so marked as to be in some respects unique.

It will be seen by the title, that the editor has undertaken a great task. If it has been well performed, the edition will, beyond dispute, take rank as the best edition of Shakespeare which has ever been published. Mr. White says that in its preparation he has spent the greater part of the last five years, has collated in that time every letter and point of the text, containing more than one hundred and fifty thousand lines, with those of the first folio and early quartos, and has carefully examined every existing critical edition of Shakespeare's Works. His first canon has been adherence to the text of the authentic folio of 1623, excepting where that is manifestly corrupt or defective. He also claims to have restored many passages which have been heretofore deemed corrupt only through ignorance or carelessness; to have

amended many undeniably corrupt passages which have hitherto baffled critics and editors; to have made a frugal selection from the works of all other commentators; to have adapted his notes to the great mass of intelligent readers; to have carefully preserved the rhythm of the prose, as well as of the verse; and, lastly, to have accredited to every author each emendation, explanation, or illustrative quotation which belongs to him.

The value of an edition of any standard author depends on two conditions. The first in importance, as in order, is the purity of its text; the second, the character of its notes and other subsidiary matter.

Purity of text, for all scholarly purposes, is the first requisite, and any deficiency in this respect will inevitably, in the end, doom an edition, however good otherwise, to disuse. When Reiske published his famous edition of the Attic orators, it was so highly esteemed, that reference was long made, not only to the section of the oration, but also to Reiske's page. Yet now the severity of modern research has attained a text so much purer, that this edition, despite its many merits, finds a place only in libraries of reference, and is no longer included in the private collections of scholars who can afford only a single copy of an author. It is not, however, the student who is most concerned in the preservation of the true text of an author like Shakespeare. No English writer is so generally and constantly kept in the public mind. Where one person reads Milton, five read Shakespeare. When to this general fondness is added scenic attraction, it is no wonder that so many expressions and turns of Shakespeare's thought have stolen into every one's mouth. It is a matter truly curious, to trace the history of the multitude of phrases which claim the great dramatist as their parent. It has lately been made a ground of very severe reprehension in one of our leading newspapers, that a recent School Reader contains a piece for declamation, ostensibly quoted from the play of Coriolanus, but really taken from the stage-play, which, though keeping the same name, has been deformed by alteration and addition. If, then, it is desirable that the boy at school should speak what are truly the words of Shakespeare,

and not interpolated theatrical bombast, it certainly is not less to be wished that the parent at home should also read what is genuine. The great value of critical study in purifying the text of an author is often underrated. In the details it seems trivial. In its results it is indeed fruitful. If any one will examine the history of philology, he will find that, during the last fifty years, philological knowledge has grown more than during eight centuries before. The great characteristic, however, of the last half-century's study, has been the recension of the text of ancient authors, and the growth of philology has been in direct ratio to this concentrated research.

Our second requirement is found in the character of notes and materials for illustration. In reading an author who has been dead two hundred years, a commentary is always needed. Ancient customs are obscure; words have changed their meaning, or become obsolete; historical allusions, obvious to a contemporary, require explanation for men of later date. The utility of commentaries, in short, is so plain, that it would need no defence, if the tendency of theoretical study at the present time were not to dispense with them in the enthusiasm of textual investigation. The danger, till of late, has been of so copious a supply, that the original at last resembles Mathias's Pursuits of Literature, "a body of notes with a poem prefixed," and, like that otherwise excellent poem, bears on each octavo page one line, more or less, of text, and two double columns, in fine type, of commentary.

Two hundred and forty-two years ago, on the 23d of April, 1616, William Shakespeare, a country gentleman, a retired actor and play-writer of some repute, died in his house on the banks of the Avon. In the little parish church of Stratford, where the register records the birth of the child in the simple words,—"1564. APRIL 26. GULIELMUS FILIUS JOHANNIS SHAKSPERE,"—some kindly hand placed a monument to the memory of the man. On the tablet below the bust is the following inscription, which Collier gives literally:—

"Iudicio Pylium, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,
Terra tegit, populus maeret, Olympus habet.

"Stay, Passenger, why goest thou by so fast?
Read, if thou canst, whom envious death hath plast

Within this monvment : Shakspeare, with whome
 Quick nature dide : whose name doth deck y^e tombe
 Far more than cost ; sieth all y^e he hath writt
 Leaves living art bvt page to serve his witt.

“ Obiit año Doⁱ. 1616
 Ætatis. 53. die 23 Ap^r. ”

To-day this man heads the list of poets. For that monument, however, more lasting than bronze, which perpetuates his name, he merely supplied the materials. He carved the stones, but he left them scattered and disjointed. They were collected, saved from destruction, and put together by the labor of others. The great master, who should have superintended the work, and who alone could finish it as its nobleness required, left it for the world to preserve what he seemed willing to let die. Literary history hardly registers another instance of such disregard of fame. Of those plays which have made his name immortal, he himself never published one. The eighteen which were printed during his lifetime, and the one which appeared soon after his death, in quarto, seem to have been stolen from the mutilated manuscript copies, out of which the players learned their parts. Shakespeare neither revised either of those quartos, nor sanctioned their publication, nor even troubled himself to expose the fraud which had mangled them. Most authors love their literary progeny, and some apparently love them all the more as they are ugly and unworthy. Shakespeare seems to have been almost destitute of such natural affection for his fair offspring. He wrote and acted, and when his labor had earned him a competence, he abandoned pen and stage, went back to his home in Stratford, and quietly passed the remainder of his life, with hardly a thought for the future of his dramas. While he bestowed some care upon his poems, so little did he apparently regard his reputation as a dramatist, that he suffered to be issued, during his lifetime, and in his name, six plays so obviously forgeries that Rowe alone of his editors acknowledges their genuineness. When he died, he made no provision for preserving his works, or for repudiating the dramas which had sought shelter under his name.

Seven years after his death the love of two old friends and

fellow-actors gathered together the scattered dramas, and published the result of their efforts in the folio of 1623, the famous First Folio of Shakespeare's Plays. This furnishes for about half the whole number of plays literally the most ancient text. Any sensible man, moreover, after learning the history of the early quartos, cannot fail to see that for the remaining plays also it affords, beyond the possibility of question, the most authentic text.

"It had bene a thinge, we confesse," write the editors in their address to the readers, "worthie to haue bene wished, that the Author himselfe had liu'd to haue set forth, and ouerseen his owne writings; But since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his Friends, the office of their care, and paine, to haue collected and publish'd them; and so to haue publish'd them, as where (before) you were abus'd with diurse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of iniurious impostors, that expos'd them: euen those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceiued them. Who, as he was a happie imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he vttered with that easinesse, that wee haue scarce receiued from him a blot in his papers."

This First Folio must not be confounded with the other folio editions. The works of Shakespeare have been published in folio four times. The Second edition in this form, issued in 1632, is scarcely more than a reprint of the First, with additional errors in typographical execution. The Third was published in 1664, being of the same character, but including *Pericles* and the six spurious plays. It is now very rare, and Malone explains this fact by saying that, since it was printed late in 1664, most of the copies were probably destroyed in the great fire of London, which occurred in 1666. The Fourth and last Folio appeared in 1685, and closely resembles the Third. The Second is of some slight value in correcting a few typographical errors in the First Folio. The Third and Fourth have not the least authority in determining the text. The First Folio, therefore, is the chief source whence a text obviously and beyond ques-

tion authentic can be derived. This fact might seem to establish a uniform and genuine reading, which could not be disputed. To such a result, however, there is one serious obstacle,—the great carelessness with which this inestimable volume was printed. “Unfortunately,” says Mr. White, “this precious folio is one of the worst printed books that ever issued from the press. It is filled with the grossest possible errors in orthography, punctuation, and arrangement.” Words are transformed. Lines are transposed. Capitals and full-points often break the connection of a sentence. Verse is given as prose; prose, as verse. Speeches which belong to one of the characters are allotted to another. In short, every variety of error abounds in this volume, else the prime source of a correct text.

Such is the character of the First Folio, the oldest confessedly genuine authority in determining the text of the Plays. About ten years ago, however, a rival authority was presented, for which were put forth claims so extraordinary, so exorbitant, and so wholly exaggerated, that in the first storm of opposition its real merits were overlooked. On more mature deliberation, the most judicious friends of the new claimant now agree very nearly with the views of some who most stoutly resisted the first unreasonable demands. This new candidate was the annotated copy of the folio of 1632, commonly known as Mr. Collier's Folio, the history of which was related, and its merits discussed, in a former number of this journal.*

While, on the one hand, Mr. Collier's folio has no absolute authority in determining Shakespeare's text, it possesses very great value as a source of conjectural emendation. The nature of the first folio makes almost any body of emendations valuable, nearly in the ratio of its size. Twenty thousand, more or less, Mr. Collier computes to be contained in his book. Of this number, one hundred and seventeen are admitted to be very good solutions of very blind passages,—solutions for which any editor must be grateful. Mr. White justly says, in his Advertisement, that the importance of this

* North American Review for April, 1854.

very valuable, though unauthoritative volume, has been much underrated by the English Shakespearian scholars; that the old corrector certainly possessed the inestimable advantage of doing his work within about fifty years after Shakespeare's death, — an advantage so immeasurably great, that, instead of interpreting the agreement of many of his conjectures with those of later editors as a proof of his authority, it is rather a subject of wonder that the combined efforts of other commentators should have elucidated so many passages which baffled him.

The story and criticism of Mr. Collier's Folio of 1632 mark an era in the history of Shakespeare's text. The controversy is dying out. Mr. Collier, in his latest work, gives to his folio a place not very much higher than it deserves, and the contest seems at an end, inasmuch as he is now desirous that the annotations should pass for their real worth only, not at their original valuation as a regulator of Shakespeare's text. But by this means a spirit of investigation and interest was aroused, to which perhaps in no small degree is due the present new and excellent edition.

The chief authority and basis of a genuine text must certainly be acknowledged to be the folio of 1623. From this Mr. White has prepared his text with the utmost care, examining the readings of every editor, and the notes of every commentator, adopting them when admissible, and recording all that are worthy of preservation. No mere opinion, or preference, seemed to him a sufficient reason for departing from that text which alone bears the stamp of authenticity. Evident corruption of this, and the highly probable restoration of what accident had destroyed, or the stage copy omitted, are the only reasons which he regarded as authorizing a deviation from it. All readings and quotations, with very rare exceptions, are taken from the originals. Every restoration, emendation, and quotation has been accredited to its author. The reader, therefore, in every passage finds in chronological order as much of its history as is valuable. This last feature is peculiar to this edition. While no "superstitious reverence for the First Folio" prevented the editor from making necessary corrections, even the slightest deviation from the text adopted

as the standard is noted, so that the reader has practically the original text precisely as it stands in the First Folio, and may, if he chooses, try his own skill in emendation. Without conforming to the unsettled orthography of that age, the editor says that he has attempted to present Shakespeare's words with even syllabic faithfulness to his usage. Great attention also has been paid to punctuation, and the editor believes that this has now been done for the first time, excepting in regard to some specially controverted passages. His faithfulness in this most important point has certainly removed a great many old stumbling-blocks.

From what we have said, it will appear that the first great claim of this edition on the public regard is its purity of text. For more than five years Mr. White has been engaged almost exclusively in this work. He has subjected the text of Shakespeare to as severe a revision as German editors have given to Greek and Latin classics. Numerous errors, slight in themselves, — such as taking the old long *s* for *f*, or the omission or misplacement of a point, — yet most mischievous in their results, have been corrected. A closer study of the original has found many passages, which have heretofore been esteemed corrupt, and loaded therefore with comments, to be perfectly simple and intelligible. How much this purification was needed may be seen in the Advertisement of Johnson and Steevens, who in 1793 boldly declared that there was no text of Shakespeare. "The vitiations of a careless theatre were seconded by as ignorant a press." They consequently amended as they chose, and discarded, whenever they pleased, the text which had "stagnated at last in the muddy reservoir of the first folio." Whether such editions deserve to be honored by the name of Shakespeare's Works may well be questioned.

As to explanatory matter, common sense is the characteristic of this edition, both in plan and execution. The first source of interpretation for a doubtful passage is to be found in the context, and the elucidation may be found there far oftener than is commonly thought. As the fundamental principle which governs the formation of the text is adherence to the reading of the folio of 1623, so the first rule by which

Mr. White seems to be consistently and uniformly guided in preparing his notes and explanations is to make Shakespeare interpret himself. Out of the passage, its connection, and its context, he often draws so plain an interpretation that study only confirms its correctness. As a single example, we may take the much burdened passage, in "Measure for Measure," where the Duke, when he makes Angelo deputy during his absence, in his address says :—

" But I do bend my speech
To one that can my part in him advertise :
Hold therefore, Angelo,
In our remove, be thou at full ourself."

The third line is plainly imperfect. Various explanations have been given. Johnson thinks it equivalent to "*continue to be Angelo.*" Others think that the Duke gives him then a written commission. In short, absurdity has reached what in anything but Shakespearian criticism would be deemed the very fulness of possible development. Mr. White, however, says :—

"The sense which those words conveyed is shown by the context; but by the Duke's remark to Friar Thomas, when, in the next Scene but one, he speaks of the very act performed in this, we may be said to learn what they actually were, from Shakespeare himself. The Duke says :—

" I have delivered to Lord Angelo
(A man of stricture and firm abstinence)
My absolute *power and place* here in Vienna."

He therefore supplies the ellipsis thus :—

"Hold therefore, Angelo [our place and power]";

and makes Shakespeare himself furnish the needful aid in a manner so natural, that it is wonderful that no one has anticipated this new and very elegant emendation.

This passage is only a type of many, which we had hoped to introduce. The four volumes of the Comedies, which make up the first instalment of the plays, are full of similar striking interpretations, whose very simplicity and neatness most convincingly prove their merit.

Mr. White seems to have been singularly fortunate in the

preparation for this work which he received in childhood. He tells us, in Shakespeare's Scholar, that no annotated edition of Shakespeare was in his father's house, and that he read the plays in which he so delighted from a copy of Mr. Singer's small Chiswick edition, in one volume. Not until he chanced upon an annotated copy in a classmate's room, during his Freshman year, did he learn the existence of those difficulties which unconsciously, with the freshness of a new mind, and by simple study of the text, he had already overcome in part, and from which he had unawares learned how to grapple with such obstacles. He was thus saved from receiving, out of mere reverence for the name of their authors, those inanities which have been fastened upon the great poet's works for hardly any other reason. He had learned to look for Shakespeare's meaning in the words of Shakespeare, not in the notes of Johnson, Pope, or Malone.

The Introductions to the Plays are excellent. The same quickness which amends the text of "Measure for Measure" so neatly, finds in the play a passage which conclusively settles the time in which the scene is laid. The explanation is so clear, that it is strange that the English scholars have overlooked it. These Introductions contain, not only the last word which has been uttered and the last fact discovered about their subject, but contain much that is wholly new, and the result of Mr. White's own thought.

ART. XI. — CRITICAL NOTICES.

1. — *Sir Walter Raleigh and his Time. With Other Papers.* By CHARLES KINGSLEY. Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 1859. pp. 461.

THIS volume consists of articles which have already appeared, with one or two exceptions, in the pages of Fraser's Magazine and the North British Review. They are upon various subjects, and form a valuable collection, embodying much general information, and marked with all the merits of style familiar to the readers of Mr. Kingsley's